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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, June 12, 1944.

Subject: "FREEZING VEGETABLES AND FRUIT FROM YOUR GARDEN." Information from specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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It won't be long until busy gardeners begin to reap the fruits of their labors, as the early crops start coming in... and if you're a thrifty manager, you're already making plans to preserve some of your garden crops, so that next winter, when the garden is bare, your cupboard won't be in the same condition!

Specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture point out that freezing is an excellent way to preserve victory garden produce. In a leaflet called "How to Prepare Vegetables and Fruits for Freezing" ---which, by the way, you may have free of charge by writing to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.-- as I was saying, in this leaflet, the specialists explain that freezing helps fruits and vegetables keep their natural color, flavor, texture, and nutritional value to a high degree. So you're fortunate indeed if you have access to a freezer locker. Into it you can put the peas, strawberries, and rhubarb from the early summer garden... and, later on, berries, apricots, cherries, peaches, lima and snap beans, corn-on-the-cob...and all the other good things that can brighten up next winter's meals.

You'll want to be all ready for the business of freezing, because this is one place where delay doesn't pay. Pick these fruits and vegetables when they are at their prime--just ready for the table and then freeze as soon as possible--within a few hours, or at least the same day. If for any reason it's impossible to freeze produce the day you pick it, keep it very cold overnight-- store it in a refrigerator at 32 to 45 degrees F. Vegetables may be packed in cracked ice if no cooler is available.

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When you prepare garden produce for freezing, sort and wash it as if you were getting ready to cook it. Remove any spoiled, green or over mature parts--no use wasting locker space on them.

The freezing experts say that in preparing vegetables for freezing, it's necessary to blanch, or scald, them. Blanching preserves the flavor, quality, and color of vegetables...and it also softens them and makes such things as spinach easier to pack. After blanching, chill the vegetables thoroughly in cold water, then drain and pack.

In freezing fruit, you may want to pack it without using any of your precious canning sugar. Dry packed fruits can be frozen satisfactorily but sugar or sirup will help the fruit keep its color, texture, and aroma. Sirup-packed fruits are more trouble to pack and freeze than sugar packed but many people prefer sirup to sugar because it helps the fruit retain more of its normal size and shape.

Many homemakers like to freeze crushed and pureed fruit, to use in ice creams, sherbets, shortcakes, and other desserts. The natural flavor of the fruit is usually very pronounced in these crushed and pureed fruits.

For both fruit and vegetables it's important to have a good package, vapor resistant in order to protect the food from drying or "freezer burn" in the locker. "Freezer burn" is that dry outer layer that is left when the ice evaporates from the surface of the food during freezer storage. A good package will prevent or delay this.

What is a "good" package for frozen foods? The specialists tell us a good package resists the passage of moisture and moisture vapor. Also, it should be odorless, and tasteless...easy to handle and seal...tough enough not to crack and puncture easily at freezing temperatures...economical of locker space...and inexpensive.

Now, you won't find one wrapper that has all these good qualities-- but you can find a wrapper that will make the best possible package for the particular food





you have in mind, and for your particular storage conditions.

Many people use glass jars or tin cans in the freezer locker, but these take up a good deal of space, and glass jars may break when moved about in the locker. Some vaporproof cellophanes are almost as effective as glass or tin, and they take up less space, and are easily sealed with a warm flat iron. Other good containers are waxed paperboard cups, and waxed paper, or other moisture-proof, bags.

Instead of wrapping frozen foods, some families prefer to glaze them, or coat them in ice. To glaze foods, you freeze the food in a can or carton to a temperature of 0 degrees F...then warm just enough to slip the food out in a block...refreeze...and dip the block quickly in water chilled to just above the freezing point. The coldness of the food will make a thin film of ice form over it, and by repeating the dipping several times, you can coat the food effectively with ice. Wrap the glazed food in paper to protect it from chipping and evaporation. You may have to renew this water glaze every 2 or 3 months.

If you plan to freeze produce from your garden, you'll find detailed information in the leaflet I mentioned earlier. This publication tells you what equipment you need for the job... how to proceed with the preparation of the food ... and even has a table showing just how to handle 38 of the most popular vegetables and fruits. To get a copy, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for the leaflet on "How to Prepare Fruits and Vegetables for Freezing".

